



BIAC

Brain Injury Association
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A resource in recovery. A partner in prevention.

March 14, 2007

Public Health Committee Hearing Testimony

Julie Peters

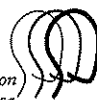
My name is Julie Peters and I am the Executive Director of the Brain Injury Association of Connecticut. I am here today to support **Senate Bill 1226 An Act Establishing a Fall Prevention Program**. Often people equate falls with broken bones however falls are the leading cause of brain injury in the elderly. And studies reveal that individuals with brain injuries who are age 55 and older:

- Have significantly longer, more costly stays on rehabilitation units
- Recover approximately half as quickly as younger people with similar injuries and
- Have greater cognitive impairment at discharge than younger people with similar injuries

A brain injury may affect an individual's cognitive abilities, physical functioning and behavior. Due to their brain injury, older adults who were living independently in the community may now require assistance with tasks such as bathing, cooking and money management. They may have language problems such as word finding difficulty and speech may be slow, slurred and difficult to understand. The brain injury may also cause emotional problems such as depression, mood swings or impaired social skills. After even a minor brain injury, 40 percent of older adults are unable to return to their homes and are discharged to nursing homes. Up to 70 percent of older adults who sustain more severe brain injuries require nursing home care.

Without some type of fall prevention program in place, as the population of older persons in Connecticut continues to grow, the number of brain injuries is also likely to grow, robbing older individuals of the opportunity to live independently in their own communities. I urge you to support Senate Bill 1226 which will help prevent brain injuries resulting from falls.

Chapter,
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Injury
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of America



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